



Election misinformation is a problem in any language. But some gets more attention than others

By DAVID KLEPPER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—Warnings about deepfakes and disinformation fueled by artificial intelligence. Concerns about campaigns and candidates using social media to spread lies about elections. Fears that tech companies will fail to address these issues as their platforms are used to undermine democracy ahead of pivotal elections.

Those are the worries facing elections in the U.S., where most voters speak English. But for languages like Spanish, or in dozens of nations where English isn't the dominant language, there are even fewer safeguards in place to protect voters and democracy against the corrosive effects of election misinformation. It's a problem getting renewed attention in an election year in which more people than ever will go to the polls.



Continued on Page 2

Election observers watch as a voter casts his ballot inside a polling station in Soweto, South Africa, Nov. 1, 2021.

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Page 2





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Election misinformation is a problem in any language. But some gets more attention than others

Continued from Front

Tech companies have faced intense political pressure in countries like the U.S. and places like the European Union to show they're serious about tackling the baseless claims, hate speech and authoritarian propaganda that pollutes their sites. But critics say they've been less responsive to similar concerns from smaller countries or from voters who speak other languages, reflecting a longtime bias toward English, the U.S. and other western democracies. Recent changes at tech firms — content moderator layoffs and decisions to rollback some misinformation policies — have only compounded the situation, even as new technologies like artificial intelligence make it easier than ever to craft lifelike audio and video that can fool voters. These gaps have opened up opportunities for candidates, political parties or foreign adversaries looking to create electoral chaos by targeting non-English speakers — whether they are Latinos in the U.S., or one of the millions of voters in India, for instance, who speak a non-English language. "If there's a significant population that speaks another language, you can bet there's going to be disinformation targeting them," said Randy Abreu, an attorney at the U.S.-based National Hispanic Me-



A woman checks for her name before casting her vote at a polling station during the Telangana state assembly elections in Hyderabad, India, Nov. 30, 2023.

Associated Press

dia Council, which created the Spanish Language Disinformation Coalition to track and identify disinformation targeting Latino voters in the U.S. "The power of artificial intelligence is now making this an even more frightening reality." Many of the big tech companies regularly tout their efforts to safeguard elections, and not just in the U.S. and E.U. This month Meta is launching a service on WhatsApp that will allow users to flag possible AI deepfakes for action by fact-checkers. The service will work in four languages — English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. Meta says it has teams monitoring for misinformation in dozens of languages, and the company has announced other election-year policies for AI that will apply globally, including required labels for

deepfakes as well as labels for political ads created using AI. But those rules have not taken effect and the company hasn't said when they will begin enforcement. The laws governing social media platforms vary by nation, and critics of tech companies say they have been faster to address concerns about misinformation in the U.S. and the E.U., which has recently enacted new laws designed to address the problem. Other nations all-too often get a "cookie cutter" response from tech companies that falls short, according to an analysis published this month by the Mozilla Foundation. The study looked at 200 different policy announcements from Meta, TikTok, X and Google (the owner of YouTube) and found that nearly two-thirds were focused on the U.S. or E.U. Actions in those

jurisdictions were also more likely to involve meaningful investments of staff and resources, the foundation found, while new policies in other nations were more likely to rely on partnerships with fact-checking organizations and media literacy campaigns. Odanga Madung, a Nairobi, Kenya-based researcher who conducted Mozilla's study, said it became clear that the platforms' focus on the U.S. and E.U. comes at the expense of the rest of the world. "It's a glaring travesty that platforms blatantly favor the U.S. and Europe with excessive policy coddling and protections, while systematically neglecting" other regions, Madung said. This lack of focus on other regions and languages will increase the risk that election misinformation could mislead voters and impact the results of elections. Around the globe, the claims are already circulating. Within the U.S., voters whose primary language is something other than English are already facing a wave of misleading and baseless claims, Abreu said. Claims targeting Spanish speakers, for instance, include posts that overstate the extent of voter fraud or contain false information about casting a ballot or registering to vote. Disinformation about elections has surged in Africa ahead of recent elections, according

to a study this month from the Africa Center for Strategic Studies which identified dozens of recent disinformation campaigns — a four-fold increase from 2022. The false claims included baseless allegations about candidates, false information about voting and narratives that seem designed to undermine support for the United States and United Nations. The center determined that some of the campaigns were mounted by groups allied with the Kremlin, while others were spearheaded by domestic political groups. India, the world's largest democracy, boasts more than a dozen languages each with more than 10 million native speakers. It also has more than 300 million Facebook users and nearly half a billion WhatsApp users, the most of any nation. Fact-checking organizations have emerged as the front line of defense against viral misinformation about elections. The country will hold elections later this spring and already voters going online to find out about the candidates and issues are awash in false and misleading claims. Among the latest: video of a politician's speech that was carefully edited to remove key lines; years-old photos of political rallies passed off as new; and a fake election calendar that provided the wrong dates for voting. □



The J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building is seen June 9, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **LINDSAY WHITEHURST**
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — New FBI statistics show overall violent crime in the U.S. dropped again last year, continuing

a downward trend after a pandemic-era spike. Murders dropped 13% in the last three months of 2023 compared with the same period the year before, ac-

U.S. violent crime decreased in 2023, continuing to reverse pandemic-era spike, FBI data shows

According to FBI data released this week. Violent crime overall was down 6%. Property crime also ticked downward about 3% in the nation as a whole, though in the Northeast and in large cities over a million people it increased by about the same amount. The quarterly report released Tuesday is based on data sent to the FBI from about 80% of the law enforcement agencies in the country. Fi-

nal detailed data for 2023 is expected to be released in the fall. President Joe Biden said the drop in the murder rate was one of the steepest in the country's history. The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, passed in 2021 by a Democratic-led Congress and signed by Biden, allowed cities and states to invest \$15 billion on public safety, he said. Attorney General Merrick Garland called the data

encouraging and touted law enforcement efforts to target gangs, illegal guns and other issues. The FBI's report was in line with the findings of the non-partisan Council on Criminal Justice, which found that homicides were down an average of 10% in a survey of 32 cities over the year before, though it found violent crime still remained higher than before the coronavirus pandemic in many cities. □

Judge clears way for Trump to appeal ruling keeping Fani Willis on Georgia 2020 election case

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and SUDHIN THANAWALA
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The judge overseeing the Georgia 2020 election interference case cleared the way Wednesday for Donald Trump and other defendants to appeal a ruling allowing Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis to remain on the prosecution. Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee's ruling means defense attorneys can ask the Georgia Court of Appeals to review the judge's decision not to disqualify Willis or dismiss the indictment over her romantic relationship with special prosecutor Nathan Wade. It will be up to the appeals court to decide whether to hear the matter.

The judge said he would continue working to get the case ready for trial by addressing other matters in the meantime.

But while Willis had made clear her determination to turn the page from weeks of embarrassing headlines, the judge's decision to green-light the appeal allows defense attorneys to keep at the forefront alle-



Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis looks on during a hearing on the Georgia election interference case, Friday, March, 1, 2024, in Atlanta.

gations of impropriety that threaten to damage the public's perception of the prosecution.

McAfee last week said Willis can remain on the most sprawling of four criminal cases against the former president as long as Wade resigns, which Wade did on Friday.

Willis' romantic relation-

ship with Wade has roiled the case for weeks, overshadowing the allegations charging Trump and 18 others with trying to illegally overturn his narrow loss to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020 in Georgia in a desperate bid to remain in power. Among the acts listed in the indictment was a Jan. 2, 2021, phone call in which

Trump urged fellow Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to help him "find" the 11,780 votes needed to beat Biden. While the judge did not find Willis' relationship with Wade created a conflict of interest that should force her off the case, he said an "appearance of impropriety" infected the pros-

ecution team. The judge rebuked Willis for her "tremendous" lapse in judgment and questioned the truthfulness of Wade's and her testimony about the timing of their relationship. Attorneys for Trump and the other defendants said in court papers on Monday that Wade's resignation was not enough to correct the appearance of impropriety the judge found. Defense lawyers say a failure to remove Willis could imperil any convictions and force a retrial if an appeals court later finds it was warranted.

Trump attorney Steve Sadow called the judge's decision to allow the appeal "highly significant."

"The defense is optimistic that appellate review will lead to the case being dismissed and the DA being disqualified," Sadow said in an email.

Jeff DiSantis, a spokesman for the district attorney's office, noted in a text message that the case had not been put on hold, adding that prosecutors will "work to move it forward to trial as quickly as possible." □

Associated Press

Peter Navarro is 1st Trump White House official to serve prison time related to Jan. 6 attack

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER

Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Former White House adviser Peter Navarro reported to prison Tuesday for a contempt of Congress conviction, becoming the first senior Trump administration official to be locked up for a crime related to the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack.

Navarro was sentenced to four months in prison for defying a subpoena for documents and a deposition from the House committee that investigated the riot by supporters of then-President Donald Trump.

Navarro was defiant in re-

marks to reporters before he headed to the federal prison in Miami, calling his conviction the "partisan weaponization of the judicial system."

He has maintained that he couldn't cooperate with the committee because Trump had invoked executive privilege. But courts have rejected that argument, finding Navarro couldn't prove Trump had actually invoked it.

"When I walk in that prison today, the justice system such as it is will have done a crippling blow to the constitutional separation of powers and executive privilege," Navarro told reporters Tuesday.

After voting in Florida on Tuesday, Trump was asked about Navarro.

"He's a good man. He was treated very unfairly," Trump said, calling him a "great patriot" and praising his job negotiating trade with China. "The Biden administration treated him very, very badly. It's a shame, but that's the way it is."

Navarro, who served as a White House trade adviser under Trump, was subpoenaed by the committee over his promotion of false claims of voter fraud in the 2020 election in the run-up to the Capitol attack.

Navarro had asked to stay free while he appealed

his conviction to give the courts time to consider his

challenge. □



Former Trump White House official Peter Navarro speaks to reporters before he heads to prison, Tuesday, March 19, 2024 in Miami, to begin serving his sentence for refusing to cooperate with a congressional investigation into the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Associated Press

Polygamous sect member pleads guilty in scheme to orchestrate sexual acts involving children

By **JACQUES BILLEAUD**
Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — A businessman pleaded guilty Tuesday to conspiring with the leader of an offshoot polygamous sect near the Arizona-Utah border to transport underage girls across state lines, making him the first man to be convicted in what authorities say was a scheme to orchestrate sexual acts involving children. Moroni Johnson, who faces 10 years to life in prison, acknowledged that he participated in a scheme to transport four girls under the age of 18 for sexual activity. Authorities say the conspiracy between the 53-year-old Johnson and the sect's leader, self-proclaimed prophet Samuel Bateman, occurred over a three-year period ending in September 2022. Authorities say Bateman had created a sprawling network spanning at least four states as he tried to start an offshoot of the Fundamental Church of Jesus



Hildale, Utah, is pictured sitting at the base of Red Rock Cliff mountains, with its sister city, Colorado City, Ariz., in the foreground on Dec. 16, 2014.

Christ of Latter-Day Saints, which historically has been based in the neighboring communities of Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah. He and his followers practice polygamy, a legacy of the early teachings of the mainstream Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, which abandoned the practice in 1890 and now strictly prohibits it.

Bateman and his followers believe polygamy brings exaltation in heaven. The FBI said Bateman had taken more than 20 wives, including 10 girls under the age of 18. Bateman is accused of giving wives as gifts to his male followers and claiming to do so on orders from the "Heavenly Father." Investigators say Bateman traveled exten-

sively between Arizona, Utah, Colorado and Nebraska and had sex with minor girls on a regular basis. Some of the sexual activity involving Bateman was recorded and transmitted across state lines via electronic devices. The FBI said Bateman demanded that his followers confess publicly for any indiscretions and shared

those confessions widely. He claimed the punishments, which ranged from a time out to public shaming and sexual activity, came from the Lord, the federal law enforcement agency said. Authorities said Johnson was pressured by Bateman to give up three of his wives as atonement because Johnson wasn't treating Bateman as a prophet. Bateman was arrested in August 2022 by state police in Flagstaff after someone spotted small fingers in a door gap on an enclosed trailer. Authorities found three girls between the ages of 11 and 14 in the trailer, which had a makeshift toilet, a sofa, camping chairs and no ventilation. Bateman posted bond, but he was arrested again in the next month and charged with obstructing justice in a federal investigation into whether children were being transported across state lines for sexual activity. □

Associated Press

Florida homeless to be banned from sleeping in public spaces under DeSantis-backed law

By **CURT ANDERSON**
Associated Press

Florida's homeless will be banned from sleeping on sidewalks and in parks and other public spaces under a law signed Wednesday by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis. It also promises the homeless greater access to services for issues such as substance abuse and mental health problems. The state Department of Children and Families would oversee local governments that set up designated areas for the homeless to camp for up to a year under the new law, which takes effect Oct. 1. Anyone using those encampments would be prohibited from using alcohol or illegal drugs, with sanitation and security to be provided. The encampments would

be created if local homeless shelters reach maximum capacity, according to a news release from the governor's office. The law requires regional entities to provide necessary behavioral treatment access as a condition of a county or

city creating an encampment. Allowing the homeless to camp in public spaces affects the local quality of life, can be a nuisance for businesses and makes it more difficult to deliver them needed services be-

cause they're scattered, DeSantis and other supporters of the measure said at a news conference in Miami Beach. "I think this is absolutely the right balance to strike," DeSantis said. "We want to make sure we put public safety above all else." During the Legislature's latest session, Florida's homeless population was estimated to be about 30,700 in 2023. That's a fraction of the homeless populations in many large U.S. cities, but the law's sponsors said it could worsen because of Florida's rapid population growth. "This bill will not eliminate homelessness. But it is a start," said Republican state Rep. Sam Garrison. "And it states clearly that in Florida, our public spaces are worth fighting for." Opponents of the law say

it is meant to round up the homeless and hide them from public view. "This bill does not and it will not address the more pressing and root cause of homelessness," said Democratic state Sen. Shevrin Jones during a debate this year. "We are literally reshuffling the visibility of unhoused individuals with no exit strategy for people who are experiencing homelessness." DeSantis, however, said the new law is a unique approach in pledging to provide the services that homeless people often need. "This is going to require that the services are there to help people get back on their feet," the governor said. "I think it's important that we maintain the quality of life for the citizens of Florida." □



A City of Miami police officer talks with a homeless person, prior to a cleaning of the street, Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021, in Miami.

Associated Press

North Korea claims progress in developing a hypersonic missile designed to strike distant U.S. targets

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— North Korea successfully tested a solid-fuel engine for its new-type intermediate-range hypersonic missile, state media reported Wednesday, claiming a progress in efforts to develop a more powerful, agile missile designed to strike faraway U.S. targets in the region.

A hypersonic missile is among an array of high-tech weapons systems that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un publicly vowed to introduce in 2021 to cope with what he called deepening U.S. hostility. Outside experts say Kim wants a modernized weapons arsenal to wrest U.S. concessions like sanctions relief when diplomacy resumes. On Tuesday, Kim guided the ground jet test of the multi-stage solid-fuel engine for the hypersonic missile at the North's northwestern rocket launch facility, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, left, watches what it says a test of a solid-fuel engine for its new-type intermediate-range hypersonic missile at the Sohae Satellite Launching Ground in North Korea Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

Associated Press

It cited Kim as saying the strategic value of the new missile with an intermediate-range is as important as intercontinental ballistic missiles targeting the U.S. mainland and that "enemies know better about it." It said that a timetable for

completing the development of the new weapons system was "set through the great success in the important test." Intermediate-range missiles possessed or pursued by North Korea are the weapons systems primarily aimed

at attacking the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam, home to U.S. military bases. Those missile can also reach Alaska, and with a range adjustment they can be used to strike closer targets like U.S. military installations in Japan's Okinawa island,

experts say.

In recent years, North Korea has been pushing to develop more weapons with built-in solid propellants, which make launches harder to detect than liquid-propellant missiles that must be fueled before liftoffs and cannot last long. The North's pursuit of hypersonic weapons is also meant to defeat U.S. and South Korean missile defense systems, but it's unclear the North's hypersonic vehicles proved their desired speed and maneuverability during tests in recent years, analysts say.

In January, North Korea said it flight-tested a new solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missile tipped with a hypersonic, maneuverable warhead, in a likely reference to the missile mentioned in Wednesday's KCNA dispatch. In November, North Korea said it had tested engine tests for an intermediate-range missile but didn't say whether it's designed to carry a hypersonic warhead. □

The U.K. has its first Black government leader as Vaughan Gething is elected first minister of Wales

LONDON (AP) — Vaughan Gething was elected first minister of Wales on Wednesday, becoming the first Black leader of a government in the U.K. Gething was elected government leader by members of the Welsh parliament in Cardiff, four days after winning the contest to be leader of Wales' governing Labour Party. He secured 27 of 51 votes in the legislature, the Senedd, where Labour is the biggest party.

Gething, the son of a Welsh father and a Zambian mother, said Wales is now "the first nation anywhere in Europe to be led by a Black person."

"It is a matter of pride for a modern Wales but also a daunting responsibility for me and one that I do not take lightly," he told law-

makers.

He said he wanted to lead a country that "can celebrate our differences and take pride in all of those things that draw us together."

Gething will be sworn in once his appointment is approved by King Charles III a formality.

Three of the U.K.'s four governments now have non-white leaders. U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has Indian heritage, while Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf was born to a Pakistani family in Britain.

Northern Ireland is led jointly by Michelle O'Neill and Emma Little-Pengelly, meaning that for the first time there are no white male heads of government in the U.K.

Wales, which has a population of about 3 million, is

one of four parts of the United Kingdom, along with England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The British government in London is responsible for defense, foreign affairs and other U.K.-wide issues, while administrations in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast control areas such as education and health.

Gething was Wales' health minister during the COVID-19 pandemic. As economy minister since 2021, he has had to deal with fallout from Tata Steel's plan to close both blast furnaces at its plant in Port Talbot, eliminating 2,800 jobs at one of Wales' biggest employers. He'll take over a government that is often at odds with Sunak's Conservative administration in London. Wales has also seen a wave of protests over envi-



Vaughan Gething poses for a photo, in a lecture hall at Cardiff University, after being elected as the next Welsh Labour leader and First Minister of Wales, in Cardiff, Saturday, March 16, 2024.

Associated Press

ronmental rules by farmers, similar to those that have roiled France and other European countries.

Gething's leadership campaign was rattled by the revelation that he'd ac-

cepted 200,000 pounds (\$255,000) in donations from a recycling company that was found guilty of environmental offenses and breaching health and safety regulations. □

U.N. says e-waste from trashed electric devices is piling up and recycling isn't keeping pace

By **MOSES NDUNGU** and **JAMEY KEATEN**

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — U.N. agencies have warned that waste from electronics is piling up worldwide while recycling rates remain low and are likely to fall even further.

The agencies were referring to “e-waste,” which is defined as discarded devices with a plug or battery, including cellphones, electronic toys, TVs, microwave ovens, e-cigarettes, laptop computers and solar panels. It does not include waste from electronic vehicles, which fall into a separate category.

In a report released Wednesday, the U.N.'s International Telecommunications Union and research arm UNITAR said some 62 million tons of “e-waste” was generated in 2022, enough to fill tractor-trailers that could be lined up bumper to bumper around the globe. It's on track to reach 82 million tons by 2030.

Metals including copper, gold and iron made up



In this photo taken Monday, Aug. 18, 2014, a worker gathers handfuls of cellphone printed circuit boards from a pile to put in a sack for recycling, at the East African Compliant Recycling facility in Machakos, near Nairobi, in Kenya.

half of the 62 million tons, worth a total of some \$91 billion, the report said. Plastics accounted for 17 million tons and the remaining 14 million tons include substances like composite materials and glass.

The U.N. says 22% of the e-waste mass was properly collected and recycled in

2022. It is expected to fall to 20% by the end of the decade because of “staggering growth” of such waste due to higher consumption, limited repair options, shorter product life cycles, growing “electronification” of society, and inadequate e-waste management infrastructure, the agencies

said. They said some of the discarded electronic devices contained hazardous elements like mercury, as well as rare Earth metals coveted by tech industry manufacturers. Currently, only 1% of the demand for the 17 minerals that make up the rare metals is met

Associated Press

through recycling.

About half of all e-waste is generated in Asia, where few countries have laws on e-waste or collection targets, according to the report. Recycling and collection rates top 40% in Europe, where per-capita waste generation is highest: nearly 18 kilograms (39 pounds).

In Africa, which generates the least of any of the five big global regions, recycling and collection rates hover at about 1%, it said.

“The latest research shows that the global challenge posed by e-waste is only going to grow,” said Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, head of the ITU telecommunication development bureau. “With less than half of the world implementing and enforcing approaches to manage the problem, this raises the alarm for sound regulations to boost collection and recycling.” For some, e-waste represents a way to earn cash by rummaging through trash in the developing world to find coveted commodities, despite the health risks. □

Worried about threats to global democracy? Elect more women in 2024, a senior U.N. official says

By **DEREK GATOPOULOS**

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Voters around the world who worry about grow-

ing threats to democratic freedoms should consider electing more women in countries' national elections this year, the United

Nations deputy secretary-general said Wednesday. Amina Mohammed also said the increasing frequency of online threats made against female candidates is offsetting other gains.

“Advancing women's participation is critical not only because women are significantly underrepresented in decision-making, but also because the future of democracy and achievement of peaceful societies depends on it,” she said. She spoke by video link to a conference in Greece on women's participation in politics.

More than 50 countries home to half the planet's population are holding national elections in 2024, in-

cluding India, Mexico and the United States, along with the European Union. The global proportion of female lawmakers stood at 26.9% in 2023, a fractional increase from the previous year, according to data published this month by the Switzerland-based Inter-Parliamentary Union. The world average for women's representation in legislatures stood at 11.3% in 1995, but candidate quotas have helped to raise the rate in many countries over the last three decades, the IPU said. Mohammed said the U.N. is currently advising more than 20 countries on how to help increase women's participation in parliament. More representative parliaments would help

bolster democratic institutions, Ethiopia's president, Sahle-Work Zewde, told the Athens conference. She is one of a tiny number of women in leading government positions in Africa.

“The current narrative is that we are in an era of democratic backsliding,” she said. “When democracy is under threat, it will have a negative impact on women,” she said. “In any given country, women constitute the majority of the electorate. This is a fact. (But) only a few men make it to the top position ... So things have to change.”

The two-day event, organized by a global network of women politicians called Women Political Leaders, ends Thursday. □



President of Ethiopia Sahle-Work Zewdein, left, and her Greek counterpart Katerina Sakellariopoulou arrive for their meeting at the Presidential Palace in Athens, Greece, Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Associated Press

Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) - Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick “to-go” breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in

most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi di bonchi cora (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening “meal” can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays



Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include, bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (dark fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, basket, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often

located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means “bag”. Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba



Aruba to me

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Papillon: The butterfly effect of magnificent food



PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film “Papillon” starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island’s example where ‘life imitates art.’ The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

“We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget,” says owner Tina. As our special guest you can choose to dine inside our heartwarming airconditioned restaurant or we also offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with great ambiance of the surroundings. Perfect setting for an enjoyable time people watching while sipping on a delicious cocktail.

Fresh oysters, caviar and wild boar

You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want some-



thing special, a different flow than the usual, then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis from Holland, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of this combined with an extensive wine list from around the world makes Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.

Let the music play!

Another reason to visit us is our Live Entertainment Schedule all through the week.

Get all cozy and warmed up on Sundays and Mondays by Marisella and her enchanting acoustic tunes accompanied by percussion only.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Jairo will give you a real Saxophone treat while on Wednesday you can sit back, relax and enjoy your dinner while DJ Jason brings you the most smooth jazz and lounge music for a dreamy night.

The musicians interact with the guests & requests can be sent in.

The live tunes definitely add to the experience.

Vegetarian vibes present

Impressive vegetarian/vegan dishes are



set up especially for the guests by the chef and Meredith from Vegan Aruba. “We offer vegan choices that are really good and tasty. Our daily soup is always vegan too”. What are you waiting for, make sure to pay a visit to this elegant yet laid-back restaurant while on Aruba. You are most welcome!

Chef’s Garden 6 course dinner by Papillon

Our one of a kind executive chef Juan Ludena gets extra creative outside the kitchen of Papillon Restaurant. Serving a 6 course surprise menu featuring his International flavors and creativity with refined dishes, chef Juan Ludena is determined to give you a night to remember. Wine pairing is optional. The chef’s secret garden is located in a local replica of the Aruba traditional ‘cunucu’ house. The tropical garden is the setting for a magical in-home private dining experience.

For more information about this magnificent option, please send us an email or ask our wait staff.

Papillon Restaurant is located at The Village across the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino and within walking distance of all other major hotels.

Make your reservation today at:

info@papillonaruba.com

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For all menus and specials visit the website: www.papillonaruba.com. □



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Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for sup-



porting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. For today we received a lovely message from our awesome visitors Susan Bruno & Michael Manchester from New Jersey, U.S.A.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba means to me a wonderful vacation reuniting with family & friends. We have been coming since 2001 and



opportunities to experience fun times, exciting adventures like Scuba & Sky Diving but most of the dinners we share with family and friends."

Photos from Barefoot & ABC (Aruba Beach Club) Kokoa.

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐

Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.

Museum of Industry Aruba
 The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower

was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown

Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch co-

lonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times.

The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. ☐

Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—Today we celebrate Valentine's Day, and what can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset. Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest points easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either

Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island starting from behind Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort up to the Amsterdam Manor roundabout. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!*

Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of



orange, pink and purple hue.

Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casi-

bari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always

use the stairs in the back.

Editor's note: This spot may be my personal favorite, if you couldn't already tell! □



Lessons from our elders:

Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. Ac-

cording to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drunk after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

When the fruit is unripe and green, this can be used to stimulate menstruation flow in women. This also stimulates the passing kidney stones. When ripe, the fruit can be used for poisoning in the gut and

can help treat rheumatic diseases, like arthritis.

However, breastfeeding women who cannot produce much milk are advised not to consume too pineapple, and people with acid reflux are recommended to not consume any pineapple at all.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to

powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis. □



*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.

*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.

Aruba: the legend behind its name

(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island.

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock



CROSSWORD

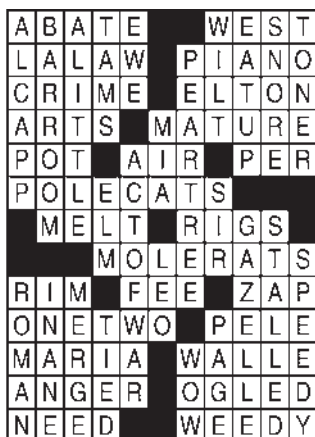
By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS 44 Mean

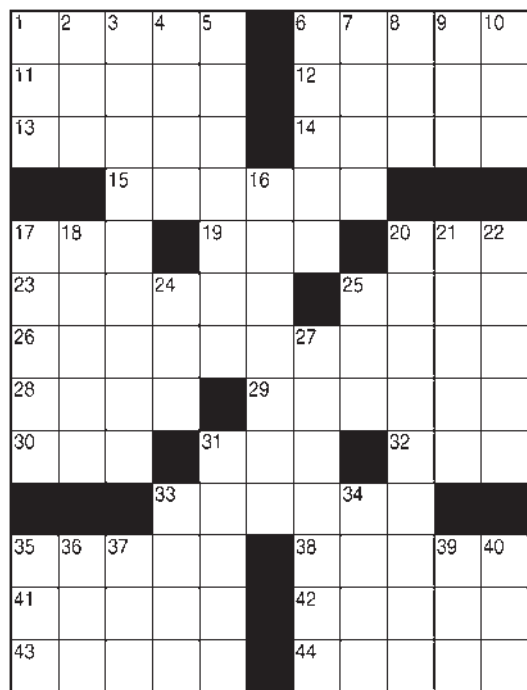
- 1 Put in office
- 6 Sudden attack
- 11 Stylishly quaint
- 12 Supple
- 13 Party prep
- 14 Elizabeth of "Wanda-Vision"
- 15 Commercial
- 17 — Mahal
- 19 Swiss peak
- 20 Femur's upper end
- 23 Maine national park
- 25 TV explorer
- 26 They pass from parents to children
- 28 On the house
- 29 Instigate
- 30 "Sure thing!"
- 31 Was victorious
- 32 "My word!"
- 33 Musical shaker
- 35 Almanac section
- 38 Lose it
- 41 Citation
- 42 Musical drama
- 43 Spirited horse

DOWN

- 1 Hosp. sections
- 2 Spike of film
- 3 "At Last" singer
- 4 Engine gunk
- 5 Schooner feature
- 6 Short fly ball
- 7 Bouncy tune
- 8 "— a boy!"
- 9 English article
- 10 Buddhism branch
- 16 Represent, in sports
- 17 Chewy candy
- 18 Without — in the world
- 20 Half of a team's schedule
- 21 Peace goddess
- 22 Fake gems
- 24 Game cube
- 25 Block up
- 27 Nine-sided shape
- 31 Grew in volume
- 33 Parcel (out)
- 34 Nightclub of song
- 35 Mensa entry numbers
- 36 Bolt's partner
- 37 Buck's mate
- 39 Skill
- 40 Calendar box



Yesterday's answer



3-21

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-21

CRYPTOQUOTE

BNLRAHLRB AGR NWVJ DSJ AN
ERA TVNBFPR HB KJ
STTRQAHWE AGSA JNF'VV
WRZRP ERA HA. — MNGW
LSPO EPRRW

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: AND THAT'S THE THING ABOUT PEOPLE WHO MEAN EVERYTHING THEY SAY. THEY THINK EVERYONE ELSE DOES TOO. — KHALED HOSSEINI

Cruise ship Schedule: Mar 19- Mar 24 2024

Day	Date	Ship	10.00	18.00	23.00
THU	21	WIND STAR	10.00	23.00	1
		RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	1
FRI	22	EXPLORA 1	08.00	18.00	1
		VASCO DE GAMA	07.00	23.00	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	06.00	20.00	1
SUN	24	MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power
Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly

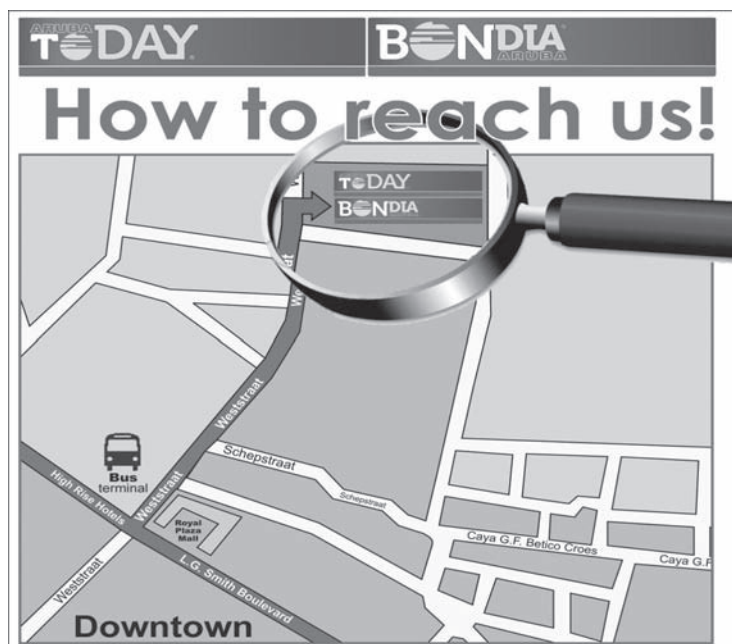
found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water
The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours
Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through

Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety
Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe. □



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Surviving costs, other drama for a multigenerational family trip

By **SALLY FRENCH**
of **NerdWallet**

For the past 11 years, Kathy Sudeikis has planned a yearly family reunion. Called "Nanapalooza," the tradition began as a way to bring her six siblings and their families together to honor the memory of their mother.

Held annually near Michigan City, Indiana, the event has doubled from about 40 people in its first year to 74 in attendance last summer. Kathy's son, "Ted Lasso" star Jason Sudeikis, ranks among those who have never missed a year of Nanapalooza and he's not the only one who's committed to participating.

"One family drives from New York so they can have their car with them," Kathy Sudeikis says. "Another cousin had her baby induced so she could bring the baby to Nanapalooza."

PLANNING A MULTIGENERATIONAL TRIP

Kathy Sudeikis works for Acendas Travel, a Kansas City area-based travel management company, so she has extensive experience in the industry and is the de facto leader of Nanapalooza. But unlike Nanapalooza, not all mul-



People travel through Salt Lake City International Airport on Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023, in Salt Lake City.

tigenerational trips and reunions go well.

For instance, some families could end up picking up a tab for more than what they owe, or have clean-up duty daily versus a rotation. Arguments can erupt over details such as when to travel and how to split bills. That's why Heidi Durlinger, president of EF Go Ahead Tours in Cambridge, Massachusetts, recommends hiring a tour director.

"The tour director is there from start to finish, so they get to know everyone's interests," Durlinger says.

"They're pros at handling group dynamics."

You can also, of course, plan it on your own.

SELECTING DATES

Sometimes, the hardest part of trip planning can be settling on dates.

"It's just never going to work perfectly for everyone," Kathy Sudeikis says. "There's always someone whose kid has band camp that week."

To avoid such drama, Kathy Sudeikis advises tying trips to important family dates. With Nanapalooza, it's the anniversary of the

death of their mother. Otherwise, Kathy Sudeikis recommends simply committing to the date.

DECIDING WHERE TO GO

To help agree on a location, Durlinger recommends considering family heritage. Her company recently organized a family reunion in an Italian village where the family's ancestors were from.

Nanapalooza's location, meanwhile, was selected because one family owns a waterfront property on Lake Michigan, which provides a convenient base

for most meals and activities. The families book their lodging nearby.

On any extended family vacation, Kathy Sudeikis recommends that each family unit is responsible for booking their lodging and transportation.

"Otherwise, you'd become a travel agent yourself trying to coordinate that," she says.

PLANNING MEALS AND ACTIVITIES

Cruises or all-inclusive resorts can simplify family vacations by offering meals and planning activities for everyone. For example, at Vista Verde Guest Ranch, an all-inclusive dude ranch in Clark, Colorado, guests choose activities from a pre-selected list, then everyone regroups in the main lodge for meals. Active folk might choose tubing or snowshoeing, while those seeking a more relaxed itinerary might opt for sleigh rides or wine tasting. Kathy Sudeikis sends out a food chart in advance to reunion attendees. Then, each of the seven siblings picks a single meal to prepare for the entire group.

"Everyone can do their own thing during the day and then meet up for dinner," she says. □

Associated Press

Budget Office report credits immigration and spending deals with improved outlook despite huge debt

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said Wednesday that it expects

the federal government to be awash in debt over the next 30 years, but the outlook has improved over the past year due to increased immigration and agree-

ments to reduce spending. The CBO's latest long-term budget and economic outlook report for a timeframe that spans 2024 to 2054 projects publicly held debt to reach 166% of gross domestic product, or GDP, in 2054. That's down from the agency's June 2023 long-term budget projection, which said publicly held debt would be equal to a record 181% of American economic activity by 2053. The CBO attributes the expected increase in economic growth to "stronger growth of the potential labor force over the next 10 years, largely driven by increased net immigration, and faster capital accu-

mulation over the next 30 years."

In the nearer term, by 2029, public debt is expected to reach 107% of GDP, surpassing the historical peak it reached after World War II, according to the report released Wednesday.

The CBO report outlines the necessity for an immigrant workforce to help the nation's economy grow otherwise the nation's population is expected to shrink into 2040 without immigration.

A decreasing population can have profound negative effects on the economy, including stagnating living standards and difficulties paying down debts.

Another factor contributing to smaller projected deficits is a 2023 agreement between Republicans and Democratic President Joe Biden's White House to suspend the statutory debt limit until 2025 in exchange for restrictions on spending for the next two years. Raising the nation's debt limit, currently at \$31.4 trillion, ensures that the government can borrow to pay debts already incurred.

The CBO issues projections that are generally more pessimistic than those of other forecasters such as the Federal Reserve and writes that its projections are subject to a high degree of uncertainty. □



The likeness of George Washington is seen on a U.S. one dollar bill, March 13, 2023, in Marple Township, Pa.

Associated Press

NFL competition committee proposes a ban on hip-drop tackles and a radical change to kickoffs

By **JOSH DUBOW**
AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL competition committee is proposing a rule to penalize so-called "hip-drop" tackles and a radical change to kickoffs to add more returns without compromising safety.

The proposals will be presented to owners at the league meetings later this month, with 24 out of 32 votes needed for approval. The committee didn't propose any rule changes to limit the use of the "tush push" quarterback sneak that has been so successful for the Philadelphia Eagles the past few seasons, or any change to the rule giving the defensive team a touchback if the team with the ball fumbles through the end zone.

There also were several possible rule changes proposed by teams that the league released last week that included one that would allow replay challenges for penalties called on the field, a change to the onside kick rule and giving teams a third replay challenge if at least one of their first two was successful instead of both.

The biggest change proposed by the competition committee regards kickoffs in an attempt to add ex-



The opening kickoff in a general stadium view during an NFL wild-card playoff football game, Jan. 13, 2024, in Houston.

citement with more returns while reducing high-speed collisions that have made the play so dangerous. The league has spent the past several seasons making kickoff returns less common in hopes of reducing injuries. Data showed a significantly higher rate of injuries on kickoffs compared to other plays.

Last season, returns were attempted on less than 22% of all kickoffs, according to Sportradar, down from 80%

as recently as 2010.

The new rule proposal takes elements of the kickoff rules used in spring leagues like the XFL.

For a standard kickoff, the ball would be kicked from the 35-yard line with the 10 kick coverage players lined up at the opposing 40, with five on each side of the field.

The return team would have at least nine blockers lined up in the "set up zone" between the 30- and 35-yard

line with at least seven of those players touching the 35. There would be up to two returners allowed inside the 20.

Only the kicker and two returners would be allowed to move until the ball hits the ground or was touched by a returner inside the 20. Any kick that reaches the end zone in the air can be returned, or the receiving team can opt for a touchback and possession at the 35. Any kick that reaches

the end zone in the air and goes out of bounds or out of the end zone also would result in a touchback at the 35.

If a ball hits a returner or the ground before the end zone and goes into the end zone, a touchback would be at the 20 or the play could be returned. Any kick received in the field of play would have to be returned.

Under current rules, any touchback or if a returner calls for a fair catch in the field of play results in the receiving team getting the ball at its own 25.

A trailing team can declare an onside kick attempt in the fourth quarter twice in a game, which would be similar to the current onside kick rules.

The Eagles previously proposed the change to the onside kick rule that would allow a trailing team to attempt a fourth-and-20 play from its own 20-yard line instead of a traditional onside kick up to two times.

Only 5% of onside kicks in the fourth quarter were recovered by the kicking team last season, according to Sportradar. That's down from 18.8% as recently as 2017 as new rules for safety have made recovering onside kicks more difficult. □

Associated Press

Former NHL enforcer Chris Simon has died at age 52

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

Former NHL enforcer Chris Simon has died. He was 52. Simon died Monday night in his hometown of Wawa, Ontario, a spokesperson for the NHL Players' Association who has been in touch with the late forward's agent, said Tuesday.

Simon died by suicide, his family said Wednesday.

Simon's family blamed his death on CTE, the degenerative brain disease chronic traumatic encephalopathy, in a statement released through agent Paul Theofanous. "We will

not be releasing any further details at this time and ask for privacy during this very difficult time," the family wrote. "We appreciate everyone who shares in our tragic loss."

There's no way to confirm CTE while a person is alive, though doctors can identify suspected cases based on symptoms and neurological exams.

Simon played 857 regular-season and playoff games over 15 NHL seasons from 1993-2008. Over his career, he fought more than 100 times and racked up 1,824 penalty minutes to rank

67th in league history.

"For a big tough player, he was also a very kind, caring individual who was always respectful and grateful for advice," former agent Larry Kelly said in a text message to The Associated Press.

Simon won the Stanley Cup with Colorado in 1996 and was part of runs to the final with Washington in 1998 and Calgary in 2004. He also spent time with the Quebec Nordiques before they became the Avalanche and played for Chicago, Calgary, Minnesota and the New York Rangers and Islanders, before finish-



New York Rangers' Chris Simon celebrates his second-period goal against the New York Islanders, Thursday, Feb. 26, 2004, at Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y.

Associated Press

ing with five seasons in the KHL from 2008-13 and retiring.

"Chris was a great guy, a beloved teammate and an important part of our first championship season," said Joe Sakic, Colorado's president of hockey op-

erations who was captain when the team won in 1996. "He was a really good hockey player who could score goals, was a big presence in the dressing room and was the first person to stand up and defend his teammates. □

Major League Baseball announces each team's starting pitcher for opening day

By **STEVE MEGARGEE**
AP Sports Writer

It didn't have the drama of the NCAA Tournament bracket release of two days earlier, but MLB held its own unveiling Tuesday by announcing the starting pitching matchups for all season openers. At least half the teams already had announced their opening day starters. "To be able to be told by your skipper that you're going to be the guy that's starting the first game of the season, it's an honor," Colorado pitcher Kyle Freeland said in a video released by the team announcing him as its opening day starter. "I definitely don't take it lightly. It's great to know and have



Colorado Rockies starting pitcher Kyle Freeland throws against the Texas Rangers during the first inning of a spring training baseball game Wednesday, March 6, 2024, in Scottsdale, Ariz. **Associated Press**

that feeling that you've accomplished something that only a handful of guys get to do on a consistent basis."

The MLB opener Wednesday at Seoul, South Korea, has Los Angeles Dodgers newcomer Tyler Glasnow facing San Diego's Yu Darvish. Glasnow signed a \$136.5 million, five-year contract with the Dodgers after they acquired him from Tampa Bay.

Perhaps the most notable matchup has Philadelphia's Zack Wheeler facing Atlanta's Spencer Strider at Citizens Bank Park. Corbin Burnes, the 2021 NL Cy Young Award winner for Milwaukee, is to make his Baltimore debut in an opener against the visiting Los Angeles Angels.

The Chicago White Sox announced Monday that left-hander Garrett Crochet will make his first career start on opening day. The 24-year-old Crochet is moving into the rotation this season, but all 72 of his previous big league appearances have come in relief. Oakland gave its opening day assignment to Alex Wood, a 33-year-old left-hander who had never started an opener before. Some other opening day pitching matchups include Jose Quintana for the New York Mets facing off with Milwaukee's Freddy Peralta, Burnes vs. Patrick Sandoval for the Los Angeles Angels, Cincinnati's Frankie Montas vs. Washington's Josiah Gray, Tampa Bay's Zach Eflin vs. Toronto's José Berríos, Miami's Jesús Luzardo vs. Pittsburgh's Mitch Keller, Kansas City's Cole Ragans vs. Minnesota's Pablo López, Houston's Framber Valdes facing Nestor Cortes of the New York Yankees, Crochet matching up with Detroit's Tarik Skubal, Texas' Nathan Eovaldi facing Justin Steele of the Chicago Cubs, Freeland facing Arizona's Zac Gallen, Wood facing Cleveland's Shane Bieber and Seattle's Luis Castillo vs. Boston's Brayan Bello. □



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